



# THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

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October 7, 2005

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The Honorable Harry Reid  
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United States Senate

Dear Senate Leaders:

## **Fiscal Aid Needed Now for Hurricane Cities, Without New Strings Attached**

We greatly appreciate Congress's attention to America's cities devastated by Hurricane Katrina, and now Hurricane Rita, and to those cities home to hundreds of thousands of evacuees. The Leadership of The U.S. Conference of Mayors, convened in Long Beach on September 22-24, resolved that Congress must pass legislation to provide direct fiscal assistance to cities devastated by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, as we stated to you in our letter of September 29.

**Most importantly, we urge the Senate to reject language that would -- for the first time in history -- remove the possibility that community disaster loans be forgivable, if needed, due to the dire situation many of the impacted cities will continue to face in the months and years ahead.**

As we learned during our recent fact-finding mission to Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama, the mayors of these cities have lost most of their tax base and will soon be without the funds needed to pay first responders, public works employees, and other key local personnel that are leading the recovery effort. These local personnel are truly national assets in the recovery from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and these cities must not be allowed to go bankrupt. Without a functioning local government, the private sector will be stymied in efforts to invest in the reconstruction effort, and it will be impossible for volunteer relief efforts to be coordinated and to function.

If you would like to discuss this further, please contact our Chief of Staff Ed Somers at (202) 861-6706 or [esomers@usmayors.org](mailto:esomers@usmayors.org).

We look forward to working with you in the coming days, as together we strengthen the intergovernmental partnership needed to make sure our cities are safe and our nation prospers.

Sincerely,

Beverly O'Neill  
Mayor of Long Beach  
President

Tom Cochran  
Executive Director

Cc: Members of the United States Senate